

Candice Miller

1954–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE
REPUBLICAN FROM MICHIGAN

2003–



Image courtesy of the Member

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR POLITICIANS IN HER HOME state of Michigan, Candice Miller rose through the ranks of local politics to become Michigan's first woman secretary of state. In 2002, Miller won election to the U.S. House, becoming the first Republican woman to represent Michigan in Congress in nearly 50 years. Representing Michigan's 10th District, she focused on national security and streamlining government in her first term.

Candice Snider was born on May 7, 1954, in St. Clair Shores, Michigan, daughter of Don and Jenny Snider. After graduating high school, she attended Macomb Community College from 1973 to 1974, before leaving school to sell boats at a family-owned marina on Michigan's Clinton River. Sailing boats, she noted, "was our livelihood but it was also our family sport and our family hobby."¹ A proposed tax rate increase on marinas got Miller involved in politics. She recalled that she became a "noisy activist."² She won election to the Harrison Township board of trustees in 1979. She was elected a Harrison Township supervisor the next year and served for 12 years. In 1984, she married Donald Miller, and the couple raised Candice's daughter, Wendy, from a previous marriage. Miller served as a local co-chair of the Ronald Reagan—George H.W. Bush presidential campaign in 1984. Two years later, she defeated four opponents to win the GOP nomination to the U.S. House of Representatives. She faced Democrat David Bonior, a five-term incumbent, and lost that race 66 percent to 34 percent. In 1992, Miller was elected to a term as the Macomb County treasurer in the suburban Detroit area by defeating a longtime incumbent to become the first Republican to win county-wide office in more than 40 years. Two years later, she challenged another longtime incumbent to win the first of two terms as Michigan secretary of state.³ As secretary of state, Miller helped develop fraud-proof driver's licenses and instituted important election reforms which relied on technology, including putting more voter information on the Internet. In 1998, in her re-election bid, Miller set a state record for the most votes, outpolling even the popular incumbent Governor John Engler.⁴

In 2002, Miller made another bid for Congress in a newly reapportioned district which encompassed portions of Macomb County, Port Huron, and much of Michigan's "thumb." Representative Bonior, the incumbent, had decided to retire from the House to run for the Michigan governorship. Miller ran unopposed in the GOP primary and handily won the 2002 general election against Democratic candidate Macomb County Prosecutor Carl J. Marlinga, with a 63 to 36 percent margin.⁵ Miller's victory helped Republicans capture a majority in the state's House delegation for the first time in decades. In 2004, she won re-election with 69 percent of the vote.

After being sworn into Congress, Miller received a plum assignment on the House Armed Services Committee, with seats on that panel's Readiness and Total Force subcommittees. In light of her background as Michigan's secretary of state, Miller also was appointed to the Government Reform Committee, with seats on three of its subcommittees, including Government Efficiency and Financial Management. In the 109th Congress (2005–2007), Miller also was assigned to the Committee on House Administration.

During her first term, Miller was a reliable vote for the Republican majority. She supported the overhaul of the Medicare program and the creation of a prescription drug benefit, voted for the creation of a private school voucher program in Washington, D.C., and favored the \$330 billion tax cut over 10 years. Miller also voted to criminalize the partial-birth abortion procedure, except in instances when it may be used to save a woman's life. From her seat on Armed Services, the Michigan Congresswoman also was a supporter of the prosecution of the war in Iraq. In February 2004, Miller traveled with a congressional delegation to Libya for a meeting with Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. This delegation was the first group of U.S. officials to visit Libya in 38 years and marked Qaddafi's decision to shut down his country's nuclear weapons program and to open it to international inspectors. Miller later described those developments as "a pivotal moment in world history."⁶ Miller also was attentive to the needs of her district, securing more than \$6.5 million in federal dollars for local projects, including a hiking/biking trail and a communications system for the St. Clair County sheriff's department.

FOR FURTHER READING

Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, "Candice Miller,"
<http://bioguide.congress.gov>

NOTES

- 1 Heather Burns, "Port Huron-to-Mackinac Island Sailboat Race: Secretary of State Sails Into Elite Mackinac Club," 17 July 2001, *Port Huron Times Herald*: 1C.
- 2 *Politics in America*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 2003): 524.
- 3 Christopher Cook, "Macomb Treasurer Wants Austin's Office," 24 February 1994, *Detroit Free Press*: 2B.
- 4 Peggy Walsh-Sarnecki, Dennis Niemiec, and Bill McGraw, "Miller Easily Wins Race for Congress; State Delegation to U.S. House to Be a GOP Majority for First Time in Decades," 6 November 2002, *Detroit Free Press*: 1.
- 5 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://clerk.house.gov/members/electionInfo/elections.html>.
- 6 Dee-Ann Durbin, "Miller Says Meeting With Gaddafi Was 'Pivotal,'" 27 January 2004, Associated Press; Ruby Bailer, "Congresswoman to Go to Libya; Miller Part of 1st U.S. Delegations in 38 Years," 22 January 2004, *Detroit Free Press*: 2B.